



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman



Thomas J. Stosur
Director

STAFF REPORT

August 29, 2013

REQUEST: Street Closing/ Closing Portion of Hamburg Street, Ontario Street, Berlin Street and Two 10 Foot Alleys

RECOMMENDATION: Approval subject to comments from the Department of General Services and consent of abutting private property owners.

STAFF: Kenneth Hranicky

PETITIONER: Mr. Michael Decker, Sr.

OWNERS: Mayor and City Council

SITE/ GENERAL AREA

Site Conditions: The requested street closing consists of portions of Hamburg, Ontario, and Berlin Streets, including two 10-foot alleys located along the rear of the properties on both sides of the 2200 block of West Hamburg Street. The proposed street closings are bordered by Gwynns Falls to the North, Wicomico Street to the East(not including Wicomico), Little Market Street to the South, and Berlin Street to the west (including Berlin Street). All Right-of-Ways are paved except a portion of Berlin and Hamburg Streets as they approach Gwynns Falls. Portions of the right-of-ways are in the regulated floodplain. The area is zoned M-3. Transform zoning is I-1.

General Area: The right-of-ways are located in the Saint Paul neighborhood along the Gwynns Falls. The area around the proposed street closing is for a metal recycling business. Neighboring properties include some residential and other industrial uses.

HISTORY:

- No prior Planning Commission action on this site

CONFORMITY TO PLANS

This action supports and conforms to the City of Baltimore Comprehensive Master Plan, Goal 1: Strengthen Identified Growth Sectors; Objective 1: Retain and Attract Businesses in all growth Sectors. Goal 2: Elevate the Design and Quality of the City's Built Environment; Objective 5: Improve Water Quality and the Environmental Sustainability of the Chesapeake Bay.

ANALYSIS

Mr. Decker operates a metal salvaging operation in the vicinity of Wicomico Street and Little Market Street and borders the Gwynns Falls River. In order to improve the water quality of the Gwynns Falls, Mr. Decker has entered into an agreement with Baltimore City that will require Mr. Decker to move some structures and all storage operations of his business out of the Floodway and Critical Area Buffer. As part of that agreement, the City agreed to pursue closure and sell certain street and alley right-of-ways serving only his property. Mr. Decker would like to remain at his present site, secure his property from theft and to control his internal traffic.

Most traffic on these proposed street and alley closings is limited to those doing business with Decker Salvage. There are no through streets. Staff finds that the streets and alleys proposed for closure are not needed to provide access to adjacent properties.

There are several individual private properties that abut the proposed street and alleys to be closed and subject to confirmation through the title report, all consents to the closure have been obtained except one from an absentee property owner. There are also significant utilities within the right-of-way. Planning staff recommends that the Department of General Services ensure that all necessary utility easement and consent requirements are met.

Staff finds that the subject streets are no longer needed for public purposes and can be closed; the right-of-ways declared surplus property and sold, subject to the requirements of the Department of General Services.

Southern District Police-Community Relations Council, Southwestern District Police-Community Relations Council, Morrell Park & Saint Paul's Improvement Association, and TRI N.I.C was notified of these actions.



Thomas J. Stosur
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